Met Office Chief Scientist honoured with prestigious global award

23 June 2016 - Professor Dame Julia Slingo, has been presented with the World Meteorological Organization top award for her outstanding contribution to climate science.

She has been presented with the IMO Prize, which is the most important award in meteorology. Professor Dame Julia Slingo is the 60th IMO laureate and has been Met Office Chief Scientist since February 2009. She leads a team of more than 500 scientists working on the research that underpins weather forecasting, climate predictions and climate change projections.

At the award ceremony WMO President David Grimes said: "Julia Slingo has been a beacon in the world, highlighting the value of climate science and services and enabling us to better predict extreme weather. She is not just a scientist but a pioneer in science."

Professor Dame Julia Slingo recieves IMO Prize. Photograph courtesy of Roberta Boscola

During a long career in atmospheric physics and climate science, Dame Julia has also worked at the European Centre for Medium-range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) and the National Center for Atmospheric Research (USA).

In a well received scientific lecture, delivered to the WMO Executive Council, Dame Julia said there had been an "amazing transformation" in climate science in the past 40 years:

"We have seen earth observations; the growth of the use of computer models, not just in numerical weather prediction but also in climate change; the role of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in setting the agenda on the mitigation of climate change; and the evolution to really detailed information that we can provide to society on the risks they face from weather and climate not only hours ahead but decades ahead."

"At the end of the day it is our science which provides the services which are needed by society." She said the next big challenge for climate science will be "all about the weather."

WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas highlighted the role of Dame Julia in providing cutting-edge climate science to inform decision-making at the highest level, including during the negotiations which led to the Paris Climate Change Agreement. He has named her his special advisor on climate.

In her career Dame Julia has brought innovative approaches to understanding and modelling weather and climate. She has developed and used complex weather and climate models helping deliver new insights into how the atmosphere and climate system works, as well as significant advances in predictive skill and climate services. Her special interests are tropical weather and climate variability.

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